TRADITIONAL MARTINIST ORDER

ORATORY SECTION

FIRST DEGREE

LESSON TWO

"It is not the head which is necessary to advance in Truth; it is the heart."

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FIRST DEGREE LESSON TWO

CONCURRENCE

As this manuscript is being devoted to the study of symbolism in general, we would like to introduce you to an excerpt from the book *Man and His Symbols* written by CG Jung. As he explains, the essential function of a symbol is to explain a concept, a principle or a truth that escapes the understanding through reason.

What we call a symbol is a term, a name, or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning. It implies something vague, unknown, or hidden from us....Thus a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider "unconscious" aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason. The wheel may lead our thoughts toward the concept of a "divine" sun, but at this point reason must admit its incompetence; man is unable to define a "divine" being. When, with all our intellectual limitations, we call something "divine," we have merely given it a name, which may be based on a creed, but never on factual evidence.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875 – 1961)

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FIRST DEGREE LESSON TWO

SYMBOLISM
General Symbols

Dear Supplicant,

I greet you before the Luminaries of the Traditional Martinist Order!

The study of the first monograph has allowed us to place ourselves in inner harmony with our venerated Masters. We will now move on to the essential notions concerning symbolism in general.

As you may have noticed in the ritual introducing you to this degree, symbols play a major role in Martinism for two principal reasons. First, the initiatory knowledge that symbols perpetuate exceeds the concepts that can be expressed with words. Secondly, human beings in their present state are no longer able to attain this knowledge directly. However, symbolism is not specific only to the Martinist teachings. Since the beginning of Humanity, this knowledge is found, in one way or another, in various domains. Before studying the symbols specific to the Martinist Tradition, it will be useful for you to have a clear idea about the nature and the role of symbols in general.

Etymologically, the word symbol comes from the Greek *sumbolon*, which means a sign or mark. In antiquity, a *sumbolon* was an object made of ceramics, wood, or metal that was broken into two parts. For obvious reasons, bringing the two parts together, which completed one another, constituted an effective means of recognition between the two people who possessed them, or who had received them. We can therefore see that at first symbols represented something that had been separated into two with the goal of reconnecting the two parts, and thus returning them to their original unity.

As time passed, the word symbol came to mean all figurative representations of a concept, an idea, an action, or a situation. If symbols often have their origin in the animal world or in nature in general, they also come from objects fabricated by humans and are then artificial. Some of them are only made of a few dots or lines; others consist of more elaborate geometric figures, such as a triangle, a square, or a circle. For instance, the planet Venus is represented by a cross, surmounted by a circle.

When the idea transmitted by a symbol refers to something concrete, such as an animal, a plant, or an object, it is easy to represent. On the other hand, when the idea is abstract, such as a

concept or a feeling, it is more difficult to represent. In this case, one must use a symbol to illustrate the meaning of what one wants to convey. For example, a lion can be used to illustrate the notion of power or royalty. If the concept or the feeling does not have an equivalent in the tangible world, such as the idea of divine omnipresence, a symbol must be imagined to allow us to understand what one seeks to represent. This type of symbol, called mystical, is widely used in esotericism, and it is in this category that most Martinist symbols can be classified.

Some symbols are universal. Psychologist Carl Gustav Jung calls them archetypal images. This is because they represent eternal principles, archetypes that the human subconscious mind translates into images. These eternal principles, or archetypes, have been recorded in the unconscious mind of humanity since the beginning of time. They manifest themselves as psychic structures, whose representations can vary according to people and cultures. As an example, the tree is present in all myths relating to the world's creation, as well as in most traditions, and the cultures that use this symbol have not been subjected to external cultural influences. This shows that symbols have their origins from two main categories: some are voluntary and consciously chosen, and some are imparted to humans in an unconscious manner.

The symbols that are used on roads are very representative of those that have been voluntarily created by people, by means of the mind, or the objective consciousness. They do not exist in nature and are therefore artificial. People have created them to indicate, for example, No Parking, or to indicate the speed limit. In general, symbols imagined by people are the result of a lesser or greater consensus, and are most often used in the profane world. Because of their nature and their role, they constitute conventional symbols.

We indicated earlier that a symbol could take shape in our subconscious mind, which expresses itself in its own specific manner. Indeed, it uses a symbolic language that is essentially based on images. It is in this form that dreams, visions, and psychic or mystical experiences present themselves most of the time. Among the symbols that are of this type, we can mention the bird, the cave, the snake, the tree, and the mountain, among others. If these symbols are present in most traditions, it is because they have all been drawn from the same source: humanity's inner experience.

Symbols have long been considered as a means used to supplement the inability to explain things in a precise and rational manner. The discipline of psychology revived the interest of modern thinkers in symbolism. The works of Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade have indeed shown that symbolic thought is consubstantial with being. Their studies revealed that symbols and

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myths are not incoherent creations of thought. On the contrary, they are the answer to a necessity and allow the revelation of aspects of reality that escape our understanding. Their role is to express the most secret modalities of Creation and of beings. They are therefore privileged intermediaries between the visible and the invisible.

To better understand the importance of symbols on the initiatory plane, we must evoke their principal functions. First of all, symbols have the important characteristic of substitution. Indeed, symbols replace our faculty of reasoning, and transmit subtly to our consciousness notions that our intellect cannot yet discern at a given time in our spiritual evolution. Symbols speak to the heart and soul, without the use of reasoning or the mind as a mediator. With continuing meditation and introspection, symbols allow us to gradually perceive the unknown and they express in our conscious mind what has escaped our understanding.

According to Jung, symbols do not explain anything by themselves. They add a particular dimension to our psychic life, in the sense that they establish relations and mediations between the visible and the invisible, the material and the spiritual, earth and the heavens. They participate in our inner evolution and take our thoughts on a journey through all the planes of creation. They make us enter the unknown and allow us to expand our field of consciousness. As opposed to the centrifugal force of an intellect that constantly wishes that all things return to it, symbols show a centripetal force, placing the observer in communion with the All. Symbols are also a balancing factor of the human psyche.

According to Mircea Eliade, a symbol allows free flow through all levels of reality. It also has a unifying function, because it permits a synthesis of the world, and a return to unity through all planes of creation. Eliade also considered that a symbol is not limited to evoking an idea or a quality; it represents everything as veiled, generating its mysterious aspect. A symbol, by its dynamism, raises our consciousness towards higher planes. It also acts as a transformer of psychic energy by the various movements it brings to the soul. Its function is exercised at different levels and involves our entire being.

Throughout your Martinist quest, you will encounter many symbols, because they constitute the basic language of initiations, rituals, and writings transmitted by our Order. Symbols are the initiate’s guide in the quest for the lost mysteries, and are essential for the initiate to perceive the infinite. To this effect, symbols do not exist solely to enrich our own knowledge; they are also the tools that allow us to raise our consciousness toward the higher worlds. As you will also notice during your initiatory journey, it is impossible to limit the significance of a particular symbol to a dogmatic definition.

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If Tradition in general, and Martinism in particular, uses symbols to transmit their sacred heritage, it is not because of a taste for secrecy. Indeed, since the goal of initiation is to lead to God, hiding the path to this goal would be contradictory. Symbols are a necessity because the understanding of divine laws is not directly accessible to the objective intelligence. Therefore, the study of symbols does not lead to intellectual knowledge, but rather to a true understanding of creation. In other words, the objective of symbols is to guide us toward the essence of things, toward the spiritual world. However, this world is not accessible with cerebral intelligence, but rather with the intelligence of the heart, the intelligence that leads one to the experience of Cosmic Consciousness.

Since the dawn of time, Tradition has used symbolic stories to transmit knowledge. Among those that are familiar to us, let us mention *The Fall of Adam*, *The Great Flood*, *Noah's Ark*, *The Golden Age*, *The Twelve Labors of Hercules*, and *Prometheus*. We will have the opportunity to refer to such narratives during our Martinist studies. At this time, we should make clear that the intention of these symbolic texts is to assist us in discovering the deepest spheres of existence. That is why we must avoid overly intellectualizing them, and we should keep in mind that most refer to events that do not belong to linear time, but rather to what we can call sacred time. In other words, these symbolic stories did not take place at a specific historic moment, yet during primordial time, a time before time. Some stories can also be related to a future time, a time after time, since on the invisible plane, time and space no longer have any significance. Regarding this, the *Zohar* reminds us that: "Woe to those who only see in these texts simple stories and words. These texts are only the outer garments of the Law. Woe to those who take these garments for the Law itself! "

This is the essential information that we needed to convey to you before you began your journey through Martinist symbolism. This introduction to the study of symbols should motivate you to pay more attention to them, whether you encounter them in your Martinist studies or in your mystical life in general. Both hold the highest importance because they teach universal truths, and because they are instruments of spiritual development.

May you ever dwell in the Eternal Light of Divine Wisdom!

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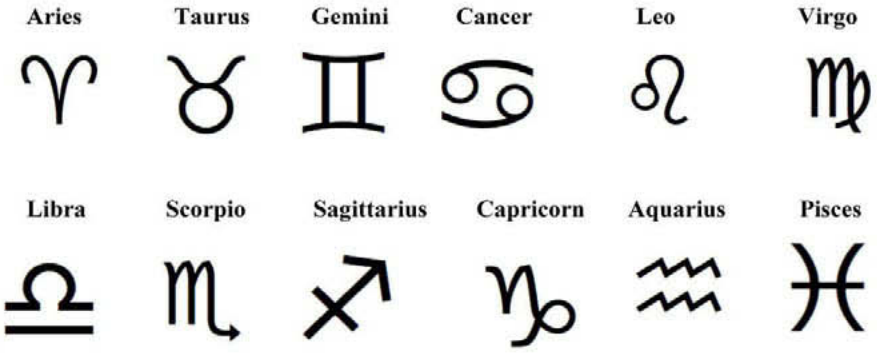
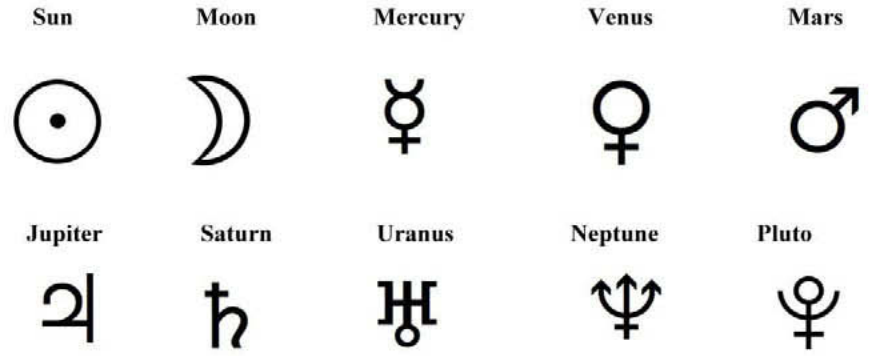
A FEW EXAMPLES OF SYMBOLS

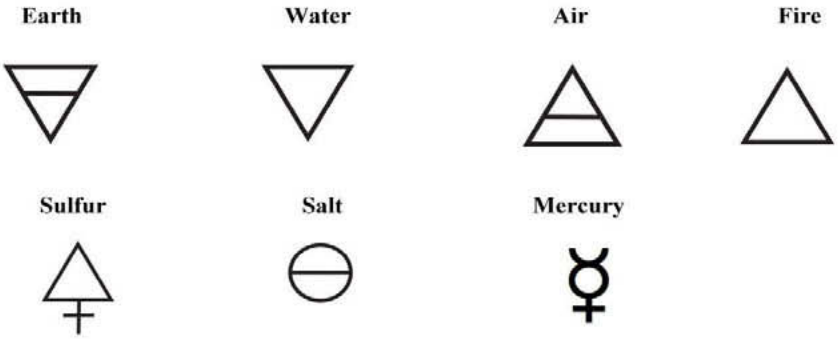
The Zodiacal signs



The Planets



A few alchemical symbols



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SUMMARY

After carefully studying this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major points that you may want to reflect and meditate on during the coming days. If you have trouble understanding one of the points, return to the explanations given in the monograph. Immerse yourself in learning the points covered in this summary before proceeding with the study of the next monograph.

- Symbolism is not specific to the Martinist teachings. Since the beginning of humanity, we find it in one form or another in various domains.

- The etymological origin of the word symbol comes from the Greek *sumbolon*, which means “sign” or “mark.” In Antiquity, a *sumbolon* was an object made of ceramics, wood, or metal, broken into two parts. Bringing the two parts together constituted a means of recognition.

- As time passed, the word symbol came to mean all figurative representations of a concept, an idea, an action, or a situation.

- In general, three types of symbols exist: natural symbols, artificial symbols, and mystical symbols.

- Some symbols are universal. Psychologist Carl Gustav Jung calls them archetypal images, because they represent eternal principles – archetypes that the human subconscious mind translates into images.

- Symbols allow us to establish relations and mediations between the visible and the invisible, the material and the spiritual, the earth and the heavens. Symbols participate in our inner evolution and cause our thoughts to travel through all the planes of creation.

- Throughout your Martinist quest, you will encounter many symbols, as they constitute the basic language of the initiations, rituals, and writings of our Order. They are the initiate’s guide in the quest for the lost mysteries.

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